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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains activities designed to investigate local history. The booklet's three activities will help young people learn fascinating stories from the past about their own neighborhoods. One activity is "Oral History," where a student can interview an older person about his or her experiences. Another activity is called "Building in Time," where a young person can study an historic building in the community. The third activity is called "Neighborhoods in Time," where a student can investigate changes in the community in history. Originally prepared as a community-involvement project for the Girl Scouts of the USA, these activities are appropriate for anyone interested in researching their community. (BT)

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HOMETOWN HISTORY

The Hometown History Activity Packet

SO 032 565

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HOMETOWN HISTORY

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Front Cover Photos: Clockwise top: 1. Alfred's Cabin courtesy of The Hermitage; 2. Early Girl Scouts courtesy of the Girl Scouts of America; 3. Washington Ave. courtesy of the Missouri Historical Society; 4. Girl Scouts courtesy of the Girl Scouts of America.



WELCOME TO "HOMETOWN HISTORY"!

We've created the "Hometown History" project for Girl Scouts of the USA, to help you learn about the past. Good history is like an exciting detective story. You have to investigate pieces of information and report on your discoveries. "Hometown History" is designed for you to become an history detective, learning about history and having fun at the same time.

There are three different activities in this booklet that will help you learn about fascinating stories from the past in your neighborhood. One activity is "Oral History", where you interview an older person about his or her experiences. Another activity is called "Buildings in Time", where you study an historic building in your community. The third activity is called "Neighborhoods in Time", where you investigate changes in your community in history. When you complete one activity, you are entitled to receive a special "Hometown History" interest patch.

As you will see, the activities are designed for two different levels. Your Girl Scout troop leader will decide on which level your troop will work. If your troop leader has any questions, she can call us.

All of these materials have been developed and paid for by The History Channel. We believe that learning about history is valuable for everyone. We also believe that being a history detective can be a lot of fun. And we hope that these activities can make the past come alive for you in your neighborhood.

When you have finished your "Hometown History" project, we would love to hear from you. Please send any letters or photographs to Libby O'Connell, The History Channel, 235 East 45th St., New York City, NY 10017. We will feature different projects by Girl Scouts of the USA on our website : www.historychannel.com.



ORAL HISTORY PROJECT: GUIDELINES FOR RECORDING AN INTERVIEW

Oral history interviews can bring history to life. It can be a very satisfying project for both those interviewed and the interviewers. Preparation before the interview will help make your project more fun for you, the interviewer, and the person you interview.

1. Set up a time and place to meet with your interview subject.
2. Know how to use your tape recorder. Practice recording a conversation with a friend or family member so that you're comfortable with the process. Speaking clearly and precisely helps. Make sure the volume (sound level) is O.K.
3. Write up a list of questions to ask your interview subject. Use questions that require more than a "Yes" or "No" answer. For example, ask, "What was this neighborhood like when you were growing up?" instead of, "Did you like growing up here?". Start with general questions, like "What was it like here during World War II?" or "How was life different for girls than for boys?". Then look for specific information, like, "How did the war affect your life?" or "Why did you decide to join the civil rights movement?".
4. When it's time to interview your subject, make sure you are there promptly. Bring a blank 60 minute tape. Bring extra batteries. And don't forget your list of questions!
5. Always treat the person you are interviewing politely and with respect. Speak clearly. Do a practice question to make sure the tape recorder is working.
6. Always start the tape by speaking your name, your subject's name, the time, and the date into the recorder. Don't forget to label the tape on the outside as well.
7. Understand that your list of questions is a guide line for you to follow. Sometimes the person being interviewed has a special story he or she would like to tell. Ask directly, "Do you have a special story you'd like to have recorded? Would you share it with me?" Sometimes these are funny stories, sometimes these are very sad. Be prepared for the unexpected!
8. Keep your recording session to about 30 or 40 minutes. It can be very tiring for you and the person you are interviewing.
9. Make sure you thank your subject when you are finished. Remember, you could not do this project without their cooperation.



Activity #1 ORAL HISTORY: TELLING THE STORY OF THE PAST

Goal

TO LEARN ABOUT HISTORY THROUGH LIVING PEOPLE'S MEMORIES

"Spoken History" is an important way of learning about the past. Another name for spoken history is "Oral History". People who have lived during important historical events have memories about these events. Most of these memories are not written down in books. But "Spoken History" gives you the chance to preserve or save the memories of an older person.

The memories may be about their life during World War II. Or about growing up in the 1920's. Your mother or father might remember when President Kennedy was assassinated, or about the Civil Rights Movement.

Working on the "Spoken History" project is a lot of fun. It's like being a reporter. First, you have to decide whom you are going to interview. Grandparents and older people have memories about the past that may surprise you! Your Girl Scout troop leader or your parents may be able to help you find someone you'd like to interview for this project.

You can interview someone with a tape recorder, or simply by taking notes with pencil and paper. (Directions for recording an "Oral History" with a tape recorder are in this booklet.)

Before you start, write down some of your questions. That way, you won't forget what you wanted to ask!

When you begin, write down the name of the person you are interviewing. What event or time will you be asking about? Ask the person what year his or her memory took place. By keeping track of the dates, historians and reporters can fit individual stories into a bigger story — history!

Keep careful notes by writing down what you hear. Sometimes you may have to ask the person you are interviewing to slow down.

When you have finished your interview, you should have enough notes to complete your "Spoken History" project. What will you do with all this information?

HOMETOWN HISTORY

YOU CAN PICK ONE OF THESE THINGS TO COMPLETE YOUR "SPOKEN HISTORY" PROJECT.

1. You can make a mobile with construction paper and string as a way of presenting your "Spoken History" project. You will need three pieces of construction paper, crayons or markers, tape, scissors, and about three feet of yarn or string. (You should use light or medium colored paper because it is hard to read words written on dark paper.) You may need an adult to help guide you putting it together.

Cut out four pieces of paper about the same size. They can be different shapes, but should be about four inches wide. Ovals or rectangles work the best.

Pick out four things from your interview that you think are important or especially interesting. Using a crayon or marker, write a sentence or phrase for each idea on each shape. Then cut out a larger shape and write the title of your interview on it.

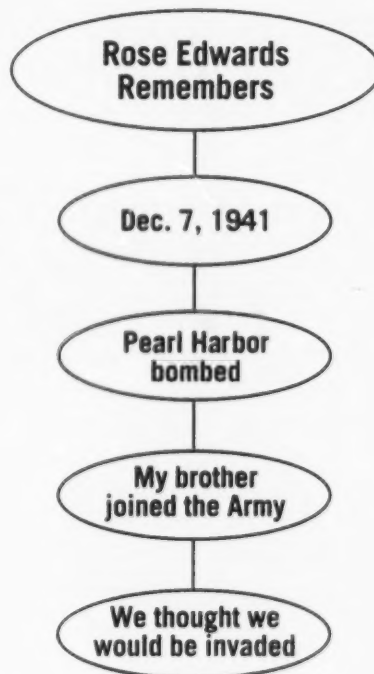
Now cut four 8-inch pieces from your yarn or string. Tie a knot on each end of the pieces. Place the string on the back of one of the small shapes and put a piece of tape directly underneath the knot. Attach the other end of the string to your next shape the same way. Keep going until all your small shapes hang in a row.

Now attach the large shape (with your title on it) to the top of the first small shape with the knotted string and some tape.

Cut an 18 inch piece of yarn or string and tie a knot at each end. Attach one end of the string to one top corner of the large piece of construction paper (with your title on it). Attach the other end of the string to the other top corner. Now you should have a big loop at the top of your mobile, so that it can be hung up.

2. You can make a colorful report about your "Spoken History" project. Make a clean copy of your favorite part of the interview. On a separate piece of paper, illustrate the story.

3. You can write a poem about what you learned from the person you interviewed. When you have a clean copy, glue it on to a piece of colorful construction paper. Use your best handwriting! You can illustrate your poem, too.



HOMETOWN HISTORY

Activity #2 BUILDINGS IN TIME

Goal

TO LEARN HOW PEOPLE LIVED LONG AGO

This is a project to help you learn about how people lived long ago. People's homes and businesses were designed in a different way, because they lived in a different way. Generally, they had bigger families. They didn't have cars or electricity or telephones.

By learning about the houses they lived in, you will have a better understanding of history. And you can make friends with the people in the past, too!

1. With the help of your Girl Scout Troop Leader, discover one of the oldest buildings in your community. Your local library and historical society can help you, too. Or look for a building that has been designated a national landmark.

2. Visit the house or building. If it is a museum, walk around inside and look at the different rooms carefully. Imagine what it was like to live there. Find out when it was built.

3. Take photographs or draw sketches of the house. Include a picture of the whole house and one or two of the details, like the front door or interesting windows. Buildings that are national landmarks are registered with the National Register of Historic Places, a government organization that can give you lots of information and illustrations, too.

4. The house or building may have a certain architectural style, like "Victorian", "Federal", or "Spanish Colonial." An architectural style is determined by when the building was constructed and what sort of design or building materials were used. Find out what its style name is.

5. Ask questions of people who work at the museum, historical society, or local library about the house or building you are working on. If you can, find out who lived or worked there. What kind of life do you think they lived? What was very different about their lives compared to yours? Would you like to have lived during that time? Why or why not?

6. Arrange the information you have gathered on a poster board (or oak tag). Print the name of "your" building at the top. Glue on your photographs, drawings, and any illustrations you have. Write the information you have learned on pieces of paper, and attach these, also. If you want, you can use markers or crayons to make it more colorful. Don't forget the date your building was constructed and the style of architecture.

7. Now you have brought the past to life with your imagination and research. Congratulations!



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HOMETOWN HISTORY

Activity #3 NEIGHBORHOODS IN TIME

Goal

TO LEARN ABOUT HOW YOUR COMMUNITY HAS CHANGED OVER TIME

Today you might live in a small community, a town, or a big city. Or maybe you live in the country. But do you know who lived there one hundred years ago? Or two hundred years ago?

Even if you live in a new housing development, people used the land in different ways long before you were born. Some of our communities are very old and have been settled for over 300 years. Other communities are new. But the land has been used in many ways during the history of our country.

Maybe where you live was once a big farm. Maybe it was a hunting ground for Native Americans.

This project lets you be an explorer into the past. How has your town changed over a long period of time? What was there 200 years ago?

1. With your Girl Scout Troop Leader's help, contact your local library or historical society. Or ask your teacher at school. Discover where you can learn about your neighborhood long ago.

2. Pick two or three eras (time periods) you want to focus on. For example, you could pick 1800 and 1900. Or 1650 and 1750. Or you could use the date of important events, like the Revolutionary War and

the Civil War and World War II. The eras will depend on where you live and what sort of information you have.

3. By reading and asking questions of teachers, historians, librarians, and museum staff, you can find out lots of information about your neighborhood. You will want to learn the number of people who lived there - the population- what crops they grew or products they made, and how the area grew. Keep notes so that you can remember it all. Draw your own pictures or photocopy maps, illustrations, and photographs.

4. Using a poster board or oak tag, assemble your information and illustrations. You can draw a big time line showing how your community has changed over a long period of time. Or you can divide your poster into sections for each era you have explored.

5. If possible, add a map or photograph of your community as it looks today.

Now you have a poster that shows changes in your neighborhood over a long period of time. Changes over time are what creates history.

By exploring the past, you have learned about the history of your neighborhood. Congratulations!

HOMETOWN HISTORY

Spoken History Project

Goal

To learn about history through living people's memories

"Spoken History" is an important way of learning about the past. Another name for spoken history is "Oral History". People who have been part of important historical events have memories of these events. Most of these memories are not written down in books. But "Spoken History" gives you the chance to preserve or save the memories of an older person. The memories may be about their life during World War II. Or about growing up in the 1920's. Your mother or father might remember when President Kennedy was assassinated, or when the Civil Rights movement began.

Working on the "Spoken History" project is a lot of fun. It's like being a reporter. First, you have to decide whom you are going to interview. Grandparents and older people have memories about the past that may surprise you! Your Girl Scout troop leader, your teacher, or your parents may be able to help you find someone you'd like to interview for this project.



HOMETOWN HISTORY

MY HOMETOWN HISTORY SCRAPBOOK PROJECT: "SPOKEN HISTORY"

photograph



OR



drawing

My interview with: _____

Your name: _____

Girl Scout troop or school: _____

Month and year: _____



MY "SPOKEN HISTORY" PROJECT

I INTERVIEWED

ABOUT

(An historical experience or memory. Example: Childhood in the 1920's)

THIS MEMORY TOOK PLACE

I learned about history through this interview because:



MY "SPOKEN HISTORY" PROJECT

Here is an illustration of one of the events described
by the person I interviewed

photograph



OR



drawing

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MY "SPOKEN HISTORY" PROJECT

Here is one of the most interesting parts of my Spoken History interview:

I think it is important to learn about people's historical experiences or memories because:

HOMETOWN HISTORY

"Neighborhoods in Time" Project

Goal

To learn about how your community has changed over time

Today you might live in a small community, a town, or a big city. Or perhaps you live in the country. But do you know who lived there one hundred years ago? Or two hundred years ago?

Even if you live in a new housing development, people used the land in different ways long before you were born. Some of our communities are very old and have been settled for over 300 years. Other communities are new. But the land has been used in many ways during the history of our country. Maybe where you live was once a big farm. Maybe it was a hunting ground for Native Americans.

This project lets you be an explorer in the past. How has your community changed over a long period of time? What was there 200 years ago?

You can learn about your community's past by contacting your local library or an historical society or museum. Your Girl Scout troop leader or teacher can help you.

Use the "Neighborhoods in Time" Scrapbook as a guide for putting together the information that you learned.

HOMETOWN HISTORY

MY HOMETOWN HISTORY SCRAPBOOK PROJECT: "NEIGHBORHOODS IN TIME"

photograph



OR



drawing

My exploration of: _____
(Neighborhood or town chosen)

Your name: _____

Girl Scout troop or school: _____

Month and year: _____



MY "NEIGHBORHOOD IN TIME" PROJECT

NAME OF NEIGHBORHOOD OR TOWN YOU STUDIED

I explored the way my community changed over long periods of time.

The time period I investigated was : _____
(Example: 1700 or 1850. You can choose any time period from long ago.)

The people and places where I uncovered this information were:
(Example: historians, librarians, historical societies, and museums)

Some interesting information I learned about my community at this time is:
(Example: Number of people living there, what they did for a living, what the community looked like)

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HOMETOWN HISTORY

ILLUSTRATION OF MY NEIGHBORHOOD DURING THIS TIME

NEIGHBORHOOD OR TOWN NAME, AND TIME PERIOD

photograph



OR



drawing



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MY "NEIGHBORHOOD IN TIME" PROJECT

My neighborhood has changed a lot since the time period I explored. Some of the ways it has changed are:
(Example: Number of people, how they make a living, transportation, schools, etc.)

An illustration of my neighborhood today

photograph



OR



drawing

HOMETOWN HISTORY

"Buildings in time" project

Goal

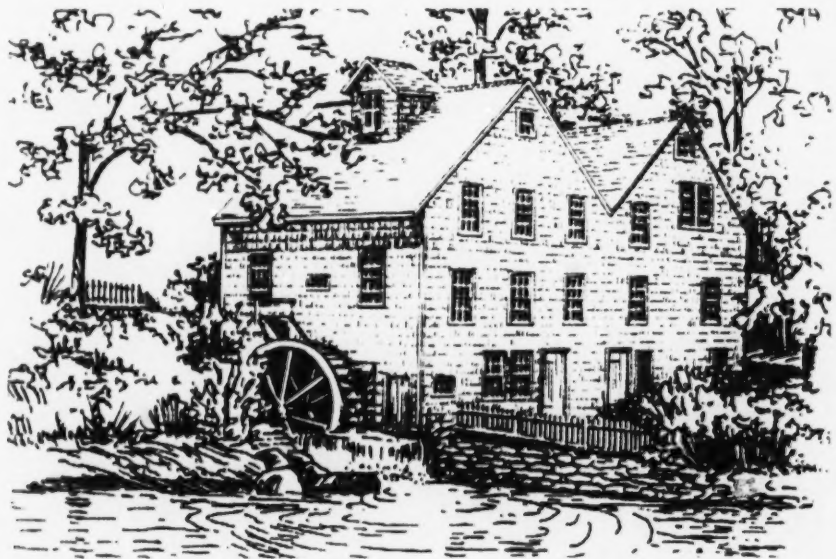
To learn about how people lived long ago

This is a project to help you learn about how people lived long ago. People's homes and businesses were designed in a different way, because they lived in a different way. Generally, they had bigger families. They didn't have cars or electricity or telephones.

By learning about the houses they lived in and the buildings they worked in, you will have a better understanding of history. And you can make friends with the people you meet in the past, as well.

To complete this project, you must first discover one of the oldest buildings in your community or neighboring town. Your Girl Scout troop leader or teacher can help you. Your local library and historical society or museum can help you, too.

When you have chosen a building to work on, use the "Buildings in Time" scrapbook as a guide for putting together what you've learned.



HOMETOWN HISTORY

MY HOMETOWN HISTORY SCRAPBOOK PROJECT: BUILDINGS IN TIME

photograph



OR



drawing

My exploration of: _____
(Building name or address)

Your name: _____

Girl Scout troop or school: _____

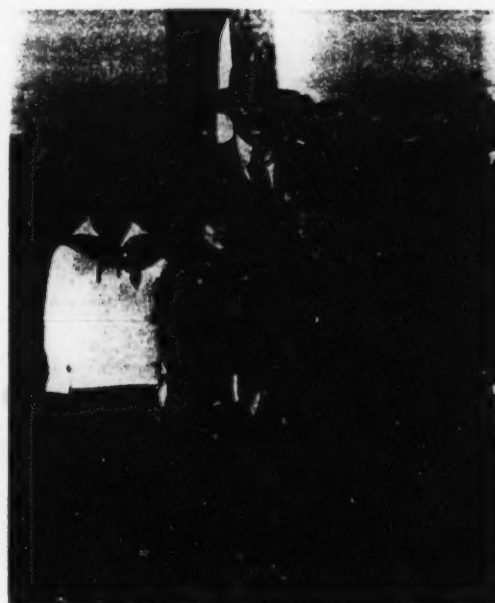
Month and Year: _____

HOMETOWN HISTORY

"HIDDEN HEROINES" AND "HOMETOWN HISTORY"

The "Hidden Heroines" project is an exciting part of recommended activities for Girl Scouts, that fits naturally with "Hometown History." The role of women in the history of our communities is an important aspect of our past, and one that has been overlooked too often. "Hidden Heroines" could be combined easily with any three of the "Hometown History" projects to re-enforce the contribution women have made to our society.

The oral history project includes a guide for interviewing people about their experiences, and makes suggestions about how Girl Scouts can display the information they've learned. A "Neighborhoods in Time" project could focus on how individual women, or women's organizations, made an impact on their community, or how women's roles in the community have changed over time. A Girl Scout participating in the "Buildings in Time" activity could examine how women worked and lived in an historical house. All of these projects can, with some imagination, dove-tail neatly with the "Hidden Heroines" program.



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NOTES

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HISTORY CONTACTS RECOMMENDED BY THE HISTORY CHANNEL:

Below is a list of national historical organizations that can help you locate historic buildings and sources in your area. We also recommend contacting your state historical commission, and your local library. Chances are, there is an historical organization in your county or community. For oral history interviews, you might contact your local Veterans of Foreign Wars (V.F.W.) or American Legion office, or a senior citizen center.

If you need more help finding sources for "Hometown History" projects, Visit our website @ www.historychannel.com and our new History Channel Traveler website @ www.historytravel.com

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY:

The AASLH is a not-for-profit professional organization of individuals and institutions working to preserve and promote history. AASLH was founded in 1940 for the "promotion of effort and activity in the fields of state, provincial and local history in the United States and Canada."

On-line @
<http://www.aaslh.org>
or call 1- 615-255-2971

NATIONAL TRUST FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION:

The leader of the national preservation movement, the National Trust for Historic Preservation is committed to saving America's diverse historic environments and to preserving and revitalizing the livability of communities nationwide. It has seven regional offices, owns 20 historic house museums, and works with thousands of local community groups in all 50 states.

On-line @
<http://www.nthp.org>
or call 1-800-944-6847

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES:

Maintained by the National Park Service, US Department of the Interior, the National Register of Historic Places recognizes more than 65,000 historic districts, buildings, structures, and objects around the country.

On-line @
<http://www.cr.nps.gov/nr/nrhome.html>
or call 202-343-9559



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